



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Uinta National Forest

88 West 100 North  
Provo, Utah 84601  
801 342-5100

File Code: 1920

Date: August 19, 2002

Dear Stakeholder:

We have completed the enclosed Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Rays Valley Road Realignment project on the Spanish Fork District of the Uinta National Forest. We thank you for your interest in this project.

We have also enclosed the Record of Decision (ROD). Intermountain Regional Forester, Jack Troyer, has approved this Record of Decision under the delegation of authorities granted him under the Interim Directives, FSM 1925, Management of Inventoried Roadless Areas.

If you would like additional information, or have questions regarding the FEIS or ROD, please contact Renee Flanagan, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at (801) 342-5145.

Sincerely,

PETER W KARP  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure



Caring for the Land and Serving People

Printed on Recycled Paper



# **Errata**

Uinta National Forest

Record of Decision  
for the  
Rays Valley Road Realignment Project  
August 2002

Page

Administrative  
Review  
Page 21,  
Paragraph 3

For

The Notice of Appeal must be  
postmarked or received by the  
Appeal Deciding Officer within  
45 days of the publication of a legal  
notice in the "*Ogden Standard  
Examiner*"; Ogden, Utah.

Read

The Notice of Appeal must  
be postmarked or received by  
the Appeal Deciding Officer  
within 45 days of the  
publication of a legal notice  
in the "*Salt Lake Tribune*";  
Salt Lake City, Utah.

## INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

The Uinta National Forest (UNF) proposes to realign a portion of the Rays Valley Road, National Forest System Road (FSR) #70051 and to improve a portion of the Tanner Ridge Road (FSR # 70387). The Rays Valley Road is an existing arterial route and an essential component of the Forest's transportation system. This road is located on the Spanish Fork Ranger District approximately 18 miles northeast of Spanish Fork, Utah. Project implementation is proposed to begin in the fall of 2002.

The Rays Valley Road Realignment Project, Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes and explains the purpose and need for improving the Rays Valley Road, issues raised through scoping, the alternatives for road location and standards, the existing affected environment, and discloses the possible environmental consequences of each alternative. The FEIS serves as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for the decisions to be made in regards to this project.

The purpose of and need for this project is to restore aquatic and riparian wildlife habitat impacted by the existing road, to prevent or reduce resource damage by the existing road(s), and to provide reliable safe road access for the public and administrative uses. The road is a Forest arterial route and has been in existence for many years. It is essential for public access, and administrative use for the Forest Service and other entities such as the Central Utah Project. Administrative uses include access for land management and operation and maintenance of Central Utah Project's Diamond Fork System facilities. Resource impacts created by the existing road cannot be corrected by maintenance.

Scoping (40 CFR 1501.7) was used to identify issues related to the proposed action and to determine the scope of issues to be addressed. A "Notice of Intent" and a "Revised Notice of Intent" to prepare an environmental impact statement were published in the Federal Register on May 30, 2000 and July 28, 2000, respectively. The "Notice of Availability" for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on November 16, 2001.

### DECISION TO BE MADE

I am only making decisions through this Record of Decision (ROD) pertaining to improvements to the Rays Valley Road on the Uinta National Forest. More specifically, the decision I am making is if, where, and/or to what standard to reconstruct or realign the Rays Valley and Tanner Ridge roads. In accordance with direction in Forest Service Manual 1925.04b, para. 1.e-g. (Interim Directive No. 1920-2001-1), this decision is within my delegated authority as Regional Forester. Furthermore, I have determined that my decision is consistent with the following conditions described in FSM 1925.04b:

- e. A road is needed for critical resource restoration and protection.
- f. Road realignment is needed to prevent resource damage by an existing road that is deemed essential for public or private access, management, or public health or safety, and where such damage cannot be corrected by maintenance.
- g. A road is needed to restore wildlife habitat.

The basis for my determination is described in the FEIS, Section 1.2. The environmental analysis and my decision did not consider whether to retain or eliminate (i.e. obliterate) the Rays Valley and Tanner Ridge roads. These roads have been identified as essential for public and administrative access (FEIS, Section 1.1), and alternatives that would eliminate these roads and access are outside the scope of this action.

## **DECISION**

It is my decision to implement the proposed action, described in the FEIS (see Section 2.3.1) as Alternative C - Construct On A New Alignment. My decision includes improvement of the Rays Valley and Tanner Ridge roads. Improvement to the Rays Valley Road includes relocating approximately 3.6 miles of road on a new alignment, upgrading the road standard to a double lane with a crushed aggregate surface, obliterating the existing alignment, and replacing the Sixth Water Bridge and Springville Crossing Culvert. Improvement to the Tanners Ridge Road includes reconstructing about 0.7 miles of an existing road along the current alignment and upgrading the road standard to a single lane with turnouts and a crushed aggregate surface. Figure A, attached to this ROD, displays the location of the road realignment and obliteration.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

I have decided to require implementation of all mitigation measures described in Chapters 2, and included in the environmental analysis described in Chapter 3 in the FEIS. I have also included the mitigation measures outlined in the Biological Assessment (USDA 2002a, p. 11). The mitigation measures are listed in Exhibit A to this ROD.

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

I selected Alternative C with associated mitigation measures because, as described in more detail in the following sections, this alternative is consistent with Forest Plan direction and all applicable law and regulations, retains an essential component of the Forest's transportation system, and best balances achievement of the identified purpose and need with impacts on the environment. The effects of implementing this alternative have been thoroughly evaluated and these effects are disclosed in the FEIS. In reaching my decision, I carefully considered all comments received during the environmental analysis process.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose and need for this project is to provide reliable and safe road access for the public and administrative uses, to restore aquatic and riparian wildlife habitat impacted by the existing road, and to prevent or reduce resource damage from the existing road (FEIS, Section 1.2). As described in more detail below, implementation of my decision will address this purpose and need.

Implementation of my decision will retain an essential component of the Forest's transportation system and maintain an essential connective route between the Diamond Fork, Right Fork of Hobble Creek, and Rays Valley-Sheep Creek roads; and also to the Dip Vat and Tanner Ridge roads. The new alignment will provide safe road access, with the lowest accident potential of all alternatives, for all users by incorporating a wider road with improved horizontal and vertical alignments, a hardened road surface, and a new bridge and large culvert. The new road will provide reliable administrative and public access during wet weather by incorporating a hardened road surface (FEIS, Section 3.4.2). The realignment of the existing road to an upland location, and full obliteration and restoration of the existing alignment will result in restoration of riparian and aquatic wildlife habitat (FEIS, Sections 3.3.2, 3.7.2, and 3.11.1). Relocation of the existing road to an upland location, obliteration of the existing road, and hardening the new road with crushed aggregate base will reduce existing and limit future resource damage. Presently, little can be done effectively to reduce the impacts this road has on waterways and riparian areas.



# Uinta National Forest

## Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Rays Valley Road Realignment

Utah County, Utah

### ABSTRACT

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). It provides a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of implementing alternatives for the improvement of the Rays Valley Road.

The Uinta National Forest proposes to reconstruct a portion of the Rays Valley Road (FSR #70051) on the Spanish Fork Ranger District. This would include constructing 3.7 miles on a new alignment; obliterating the existing road; replacing of Sixth Water Bridge and Springville Crossing Culvert; and improving 0.7 miles of the Tanner Ridge Road (FSR #70387). The purpose of and need for this project is to restore aquatic and riparian wildlife habitat impacted by the existing road, to prevent or reduce resource damage by the existing road(s), and to provide reliable safe road access for the public and administrative uses. Administrative uses include Forest Service access for land management and operation and maintenance of Central Utah Project's, Diamond Fork System facilities. The road is essential for public access, and Forest Service and Central Utah Project management. The resource damage created by the existing road cannot be corrected by maintenance.

Based on comments, issues and concerns received during scoping, the Forest Service interdisciplinary team (IDT) identified the following driving issues: watershed resources; aquatic species and inventoried roadless areas; health, safety and transportation. Driving issues assisted in the development of three alternatives:

- A) Leave the road in its current condition (No Action);
- B) Reconstruct using the existing alignment; and
- C) Construct on a new alignment (Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative).

A description of the affected environment is in terms of physical, biological, and social aspects of the human environment. A detailed analysis of the alternatives is evaluated in terms of direct, indirect, unavoidable and cumulative impacts on aspects of the affected environment. Also included are mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset impacts.

The USDA Forest Service is the lead agency and Intermountain Regional Forester, Jack Troyer, is the Responsible Official.

To receive more information, please contact Renee Flanagan at (801) 377-5780; [rflanagan@fs.fed.us](mailto:rflanagan@fs.fed.us); or Uinta National Forest, 88 West 100 North, P.O. Box 1428, Provo, UT 84603-1428. Access to the electronic version of this FEIS, can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/uinta>.

August 2002

## Introduction

This summary provides an overview of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), for the Rays Valley Road Realignment Project. It describes the purpose and need for action, scoping and public involvement, alternative formulation, alternatives to be analyzed, affected environment, and discloses environmental effects of each alternative.

The Uinta National Forest proposes to realign the Rays Valley Road, National Forest System Road (FSR) #70051. The purpose of and need for this project is to restore aquatic and riparian wildlife habitat impacted by the existing road, to prevent or reduce resource damage by the existing road(s), and to provide reliable safe road access for the public and administrative uses. The project area is approximately 14 miles East of Springville, Utah and 18 miles Northeast of Spanish Fork, Utah from Springville Crossing at the intersection with the Right Fork of Hobble Creek and Diamond Fork roads to the start of the double lane crushed aggregate surface portion of the Rays Valley – Sheep Creek Road.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 provides for public involvement during the EIS process. Scoping (40 CFR 1501.7) was the method used to identify issues related to the proposed action and to determine the scope of issues to be addressed. This process began with a Notice of Intent and a revised Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement. These were published in the Federal Register and subsequently, mailed to all parties on the project's mailing list and comments were also solicited through a news release to local media sources. Public response included 14 written comments. A Notice of Availability for the DEIS was published in the Federal Register on November 16, 2001 and subsequently, the DEIS, with an Errata sheet, was mailed to all parties on the project's mailing list (FEIS, Appendix A). Comments were also solicited through a news release to local media sources. Public response to the DEIS included 6 written comments.

A Forest Service Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) identified comments and concerns and relevant issues. The identified driving issues were used to develop a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action and analyze alternatives. All alternatives address the purpose and need, issues raised during scoping, and avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. Alternatives that are not reasonable based on inconsistency with purpose and need were not analyzed in detail. The DEIS also addresses the No Action alternative, disclosing the effects of not undertaking a federal action.

The affected environment provides a baseline description of the existing environment. The purpose of this section is to succinctly describe the affected environment of the area(s) to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration (40 CFR 1502.15). The existing environment is in terms of physical, biological, and human resource areas. The areas identified are watershed resources; aquatic species; health, safety and transportation; and inventoried roadless areas. The data and analysis of resource area is commensurate with the importance of the impact (40 CFR 1502.15). Due to the nature of the proposed action, the components of the environment most likely to be affected are discussed in some detail. A brief baseline description of non-driving resource areas that the IDT believed should be disclosed is incorporated into the FEIS.

The environmental effects analysis includes resources affected by the Proposed Action and alternatives and forms the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives (40 CFR 1502.16). Effects occurring to various resources are described as direct, indirect, unavoidable, or cumulative effects of an alternative.